

2
3 LOW COST PARACHUTE

4
5 STATEMENT OF GOVERNMENT INTEREST

6 The invention described herein may be manufactured and used
7 by the U.S. Government for Governmental purposes without the
8 payment of any royalty thereon.
9

10 BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

11 1. Field of the Invention

12 The invention described and shown herein relates to
13 parachutes and is directed more particularly to a low cost cargo
14 parachute for use in providing water, food and supplies to areas
15 unreachable by other means, for humanitarian relief, or for remote
16 military operations.

17 2. Description of the Prior Art

18 In use, very few airdrop parachutes are returned for reuse.
19 By and large, only in training does reuse of parachutes occur.
20 Yet, parachutes are relatively expensive items.

21 Most cargo parachutes are round with numerous suspension
22 lines attached to a skirt portion of the parachute fabric. A
23 multitude of lines are sewn into the fabric to reinforce the
24 fabric which itself is sewn together in pieces. A typical 26 foot
25 high velocity cargo parachute is provided with 26 suspension

1 lines. Much of the expense incurred in the manufacture of such
2 parachutes is devoted to the many feet of lines used and the
3 sewing together of small pieces of cloth and reinforcement tapes.
4 Typically a parachute of this type must be vented so as to survive
5 high opening forces at altitudes of 25,000 feet, or more. Present
6 technology requires labor intensive methods to accomplish this.

7 A simpler, less expensive, parachute is a "cross chute" which
8 includes two rectangular pieces of cloth sewn together in a cross
9 shape. The stitching is simplified in a cross chute inasmuch as
10 the stitching is principally in a straight line and larger pieces
11 of fabric are joined together. Still, the cross chute requires
12 many suspension lines and many reinforcement lines on the canopy.

13 Both types of parachutes utilize canopies which traditionally
14 are of nylon, which usually is produced in 5 foot wide strips.
15 The nylon pieces must be sewn together and reinforced with lines
16 and tapes.

17 Considering that most parachutes are used only once in
18 delivery of humanitarian and military supplies, it is deemed
19 necessary that there be made available a much less expensive cargo
20 parachute which offers acceptable performance.

21 22 SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

23 Accordingly, an object of the invention is to provide a low
24 cost parachute for cargo airdrops.

1 With the above and other objects in view, a feature of the
2 invention is the provision of a parachute comprising a plurality
3 of first strips of fabric adapted to define a pattern wherein the
4 first strips are separated from each other and extend parallel to
5 each other, and a plurality of second strips of fabric adapted to
6 further define the pattern wherein the second strips are separated
7 from each other and extend parallel to each other and normal to
8 the first strips, the number of the second strips being equal to
9 the number of the first strips. The first and second strips cross
10 each other at center portions thereof and thereby define vent
11 holes. The ends of the strips are connected to suspension lines
12 which are extendible to a confluence area.

13 The above and other features of the invention, including
14 various novel details of construction and combinations of parts,
15 will now be more particularly described with reference to the
16 accompanying drawings and pointed out in the claims. It will be
17 understood that the particular parachutes embodying the invention
18 are shown by way of illustration only and not as limitations of
19 the invention. The principles and features of this invention may
20 be employed in various and numerous embodiments without departing
21 from the scope of the invention.

1 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

2 Reference is made to the accompanying drawings in which are
3 shown illustrative embodiments of the invention, from which its
4 novel features and advantages will be apparent.

5 In the drawings:

6 FIG. 1 is a perspective view of one form of parachute
7 illustrative of an embodiment of the invention;

8 FIG. 2 is a top view of a canopy portion of the parachute of
9 FIG. 1 disposed in a plane;

10 FIG. 3 is similar to FIG. 2, but showing an alternative
11 embodiment;

12 FIG. 4 is similar to FIGS. 2 and 3, but illustrative of
13 another alternative embodiment; and

14 FIG. 5 is similar to FIG. 1, but showing a further
15 alternative embodiment.

16
17 DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

18 Referring to FIG. 1, it will be seen that an illustrative
19 parachute includes a canopy 10 and suspension lines 12 fixed at
20 one end to the canopy 10 and extendible toward a confluence area
21 14.

22 As shown in FIG. 2, the canopy 10 is formed by a plurality of
23 first strips 16 of fabric, preferably woven polypropylene. The
24 strips 16 are separated from each other and extend parallel to
25 each other. A plurality of second strips 18 of the same fabric

1 are separated from each other and extend parallel to each other
2 and are normal to the first strips 16.

3 In an embodiment provided to replace a prior art round 26
4 foot high velocity cargo chute (not shown), the strips 16, 18
5 preferably are three feet wide and fifty-one feet long. Inasmuch
6 as woven polypropylene is produced in strips of three feet width,
7 the stock material does not have to be sewn together to form
8 larger pieces. The strips are cut to a desired length. The edges
9 of the strips are finished during the making of the standard
10 fabric used, and are strong enough to withstand tearing without
11 the use of reinforcement lines or tapes. The woven polypropylene
12 material exhibits a tear resistance of 40 to 65 pounds, whereas
13 commonly used nylon exhibits a tear resistance of 5 to 10 pounds.

14 As best shown in FIG. 2, the strips 16, 18 cross each other
15 in the center area of the canopy 10. Inasmuch as the strips 16
16 are separated from each other, and the strips 18 are similarly
17 separated, the strips 16, 18 form vents 20, which serve to relieve
18 the canopy of excessive forces which might damage the canopy or
19 the article of cargo during opening. The arrangement of strips
20 and the vents formed thereby has been found to provide gentle
21 opening of the canopy with low opening shock, yet provide
22 sufficient drag for a desired rate of descent.

23 The strips 16, 18 are sewn together at the areas of their
24 crossing each other. Aside from this sewing, there is no sewing
25 in the entire canopy.

1 The suspension lines 12 are ropes, each tied to a strip end
2 22 by a self-tightening slip knot 24 that extends around the strip
3 end gathered fabric. One suspension line 12 is tied to each strip
4 end. Thus, the parachute presented herein in FIGS. 1 and 2
5 requires twelve suspension lines. The round 26 foot parachute
6 referred to hereinabove requires 26 suspension lines and the
7 aforementioned cross parachute generally requires 20 suspension
8 lines in this size. Chutes larger or smaller require
9 correspondingly fewer lines than prior art round or cross
10 parachutes. Inasmuch as the suspension lines 12 are tied to the
11 strip ends 22, there are no additional attaching loops,
12 reinforcements, ties or sewing for attachment of the suspension
13 lines 12 to the canopy 10.

14 Referring to FIG. 3, it will be seen that a smaller version
15 of the parachute of FIGS. 1 and 2 includes two first strips 16A
16 and two second strips 18A. In this case, one vent 20A is provided
17 and only eight suspension lines are required.

18 Thus, the parachute illustrated in FIGS. 1, 2, and 3 enables
19 the use of stock widths of material without any reinforcement
20 lines or tapes. The suspension lines are reduced in number and
21 require no canopy lines or sewing for affixing the suspension
22 lines. Aside from the area where the strips 16, 18 cross, there
23 is no required sewing in the canopy of the present parachute.

24 Referring to FIG. 4, there is shown a low velocity version
25 featuring five first strips 16B and five second strips 18B,

1 providing sixteen vents 20B. In this embodiment, the strips
2 preferably are 5 feet wide and 90 feet long.

3 The designs described above are scaleable and can be applied
4 to smaller (FIG. 3) and larger (FIG. 4) parachutes to provide
5 similar performance at a lower cost. The widths and lengths of
6 the strips can be proportionally sized to fit larger and smaller
7 chutes.

8 Tests of the parachute shown in FIGS. 1 and 2 have been
9 conducted.

10 A parachute attached to a 1,500 pound load was dropped at
11 5,000 feet. The drop was successful. No damage to the parachute
12 was experienced and a decent rate of 70 ft/sec. was observed. The
13 desired range for high velocity cargo drops is 70-90 ft/sec.

14 The same parachute attached to a 2,200 pound load was dropped
15 at 15,000 feet. The drop was successful. No damage to the
16 parachute as experienced and the decent rate was clocked at 75
17 ft/sec.

18 The same parachute attached to a 2,200 pound load was dropped
19 at 18,000 feet. The drop was successful. No damage to the
20 parachute as observed. The decent rate was 70 ft/sec.

21 A newly fabricated parachute attached to a 2,200 pound load
22 was dropped from an altitude of 25,000 feet. The drop was
23 successful. Minor damage to one strip was noted. The decent rate
24 was 75 ft./sec.

1 The parachute from the last drop was repaired and attached to
2 a 2,200 pound load and dropped from 25,000 feet. The drop was
3 successful.

4 Each drop was from a C-130 aircraft over the Yuma Proving
5 Grounds. Subsequently, about 20 more successful air drops have
6 been conducted at max load at 25,000 feet. One drop of the chute
7 shown in FIG. 4 was conducted with 1,000 lbs. and performed well
8 at a descent rate of 21 ft/sec.

9 The combined features of the above-described parachute allow
10 the parachute to be produced for from one third to one half the
11 cost of the standard round cargo parachute and provides a reduced
12 impact velocity.

13 Referring to FIG. 5, it will be seen that the confluence area
14 14 may include D-rings 15, known in the art, and may include load
15 spreaders 17. In the latter embodiment, each side of the canopy
16 10 is provided with a bundle of lines 12 routed through the load
17 spreaders 17, and thence to the D-rings 15, which support an
18 article 19 to be delivered. The lines 12 are fastened to the D-
19 rings 15.

20 The load spreaders 17 are constructed of two pieces of nylon
21 welding with a loop formed in each end. The load spreaders are
22 bound together in an X pattern, providing four spaced end loops,
23 through which pass the lines 12 extending to the D-rings 15. This
24 arrangement permits the lines to adjust to a tumbling article 19

1 and to the proper opening of the parachute when carrying an
2 article with uneven loading.

3 There is thus provided a new parachute providing a new
4 geometry and a new method of construction. The new parachute is
5 very low in costs, both in terms of materials and cost of
6 production. The design remains applicable to scaled-up and
7 scaled-down versions.

8 It will be apparent that when packed or deployed the
9 parachute will not be laid out in the planar fashion shown in
10 FIGS. 2-4. However, in the construction of the parachute the
11 strips are arranged so that they are adapted to define the
12 patterns shown in FIGS. 2-4.

13 It is to be understood that the present invention is by no
14 means limited to the particular constructions herein disclosed
15 and/or shown in the drawings, but also comprises any modification
16 or equivalent within the scope of the claims.